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USING INTERACTIVE COMPUTING TO EXPAND INTELLIGENCE
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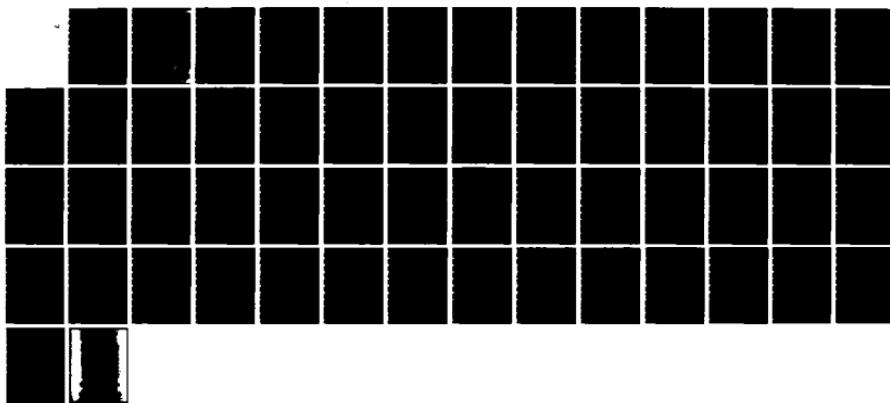
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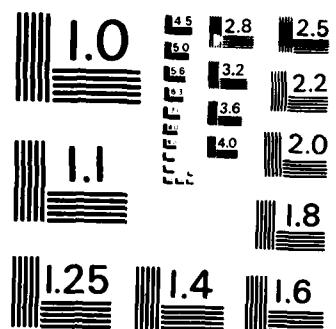
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USING INTERACTIVE COMPUTING TO EXPAND INTELLIGENCE
TESTING. A CRITIQUE AND PROSPECTUS.

EARL HUNT

AND

JAMES PELLEGRINO

MAY 1984

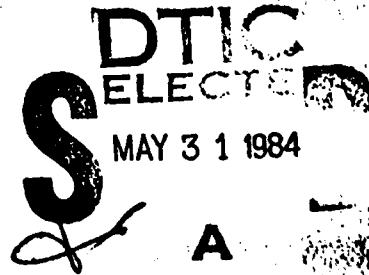
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Abstract

Using Interactive Computing to Expand Intelligence Testing. A Critique and Prospective(1)

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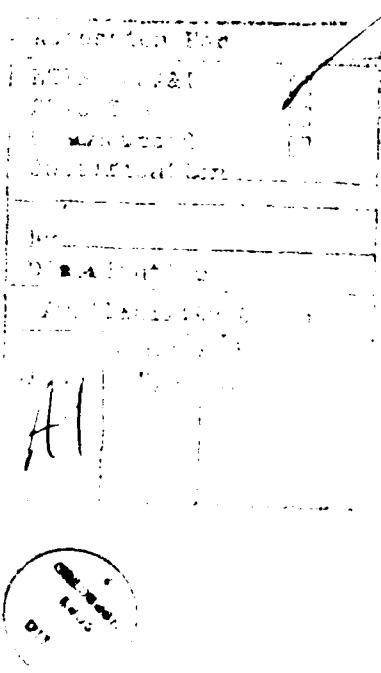
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Microcomputers can serve as automated testing stations for use in psychometric assessment. There are economic advantages in conducting aptitude and intelligence testing with such stations. Is it possible to improve the quality or cognitive assessment by extending the range of cognitive abilities to be assessed? Two types of extension are considered; modifying and expanding testing procedures for psychological functions that are components of conventional tests, and the extension of testing to psychological functions not generally assessed by conventional intelligence or aptitude tests. Computerized presentations will make relatively little difference in our ways of testing verbal comprehension. Computer controlled testing could well extend the ways in which we evaluate spatial-visual functioning and sensory. The impact of testing on the evaluation of reasoning is unclear. Computer-controlled item presentation makes it possible to conceive of tests of learning and attention, neither of which are evaluated in most psychometric programs today. The psychological nature of the abilities being assessed raises problems in assessment that are irrelevant to the use of computers.

Running Head: INTELLIGENCE TESTING



Some research questions are identified that ought to be explored before testing is extended into these fields. Computer-controlled evaluation could be extended to the assessment of criterios performance, either in the normal working situation or in a simulation of the workplace. While evaluation of this sort does raise social questions, it clearly presents an opportunity to obtain validation data for psychological assessment studies.

Introduction

We all know that we live in the computer age. At the same time an eminent science writer has called our culture the psychological society (Gross, 1978). Inevitably, the two have met. At the 1983 American Psychological Society meeting many vendors offered demonstrations of how various psychological functions could be evaluated on a computer. The Department of Defense is in the process of moving to computer controlled testing in recruit evaluation, one of the largest personnel selection programs in the world (Green et al., 1982). On the other hand, misgivings about the rush to computerize have been voiced. An example of such a misgiving is Matarrasso's (1983) concern that the introduction of computers could change both the nature of testing and the interpretation of test scores. His remarks serve as a useful reminder that personnel evaluation is at its heart an exercise in psychology, not computer science. Applying computer technology is a means, not an end.

In this paper we shall discuss some of the potentials and problems involved in computerized testing. There are

two issues involved. One deals with the advantages or disadvantages of using a computer to administer a test, regardless of the test's content. Most of the literature in the field has addressed this issue. The advantage seems to lie with the computer, for reasons that we describe immediately below. (We shall express a few misgivings). A far more difficult issue is whether or not the content of mental tests can be, or should be, changed in computerized testing. The second issue will occupy most of our discussion.

Tests of mental ability can be classified as individually administered or group administered tests. Individually administered tests are generally regarded as more valid, for two reasons. The examiner, functioning as a stimulus presentation device, can produce a variety of different auditory, visual, and even tactile stimuli. The same examiner, functioning as a control device, can determine what questions are most likely to be informative about a particular examinee. The paper and pencil form of group administered tests has none of these advantages but it is much cheaper. As a result, fixed format, paper and pencil testing is often the method of choice for personnel screening involving large groups of people. Notable examples are tests used for personnel classification in

education, the military, and the civil service. Paper and pencil tests have been criticized for their inflexibility and limited scope, but their cost-effectiveness has not been seriously challenged.

Computer-controlled test administration (1) fails between the individual and the group testing situations. Almost any question that can be presented in paper and pencil format can be presented using a computer controlled, television-like display. Furthermore, it is relatively easy to program rules to make the next display contingent upon the response to past displays; i.e., to have the computer assume the control functions of the examiner in the individual testing situation. Finally, test scoring and administration are greatly simplified if responses are recorded directly by a computing system as the test is taken.

The very considerable administrative advantages of computer control for test scoring, statistics collection, and item alteration are obvious. Interactive testing also is potentially a more efficient use of the examinee's time than is evaluation using a fixed test. In virtually all intelligence testing it is assumed that there is a linear relation between the test score (usually number of items

correct) and some underlying psychological trait. (Allen and Ten, 1979). Many modern analyses make the further assumption that individual items vary in difficulty and that the probability of an individual's passing an item is a joint function of the individual's talent (i.e. position on the underlying psychological trait) and the item's difficulty. Now suppose that the computer program has access to a "bank" of items of known difficulty, defined by obtaining norms for item difficulty in a reference population. An interactive program can determine a person's ability by finding the item difficulty level at which the examinee passes a fixed percentage of the items presented. (Lord and Novick, 1969). Many interactive testing programs adopt this strategy. The proposed Armed Services testing procedure is an excellent example.

The arguments just given for computerized testing are based on administrative issues. A subtler issue is whether or not the fact of computerized testing would change the psychological talent being evaluated. This concern takes two forms: Computerized testing could change the ability being evaluated for all people, or it could selectively change the ability being evaluated in some candidates but not others. The evidence is mixed in both cases. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that the

change produced by computerization would necessarily be a change for the worse.

Responding to computerized tests evidently does require a specialized ability to deal with the test format. This was shown by Lansen et al. (1982) in a study that examined the correlations between computerized and paper and pencil tests of the "crystallized" and "visual" factors of intelligence that are specified in the Cattell-Horn theory of intelligence (Cattell, 1971; Hera and Donaldson, 1980). Lansen et al. found that the error components of the various computerized tests were correlated with each other, but not with the error components of the paper and pencil tests. This means that there are separate factors for item presentation mode, but that the presentation factors do not interact with other factors. Therefore tests presented in either format would be equally valid tests of intelligence factors, providing that the relative loadings of tests on the "psychological" and "mode" factors do not change across testing conditions. While definitive studies have not been done, there is evidence that this is the case. Computerized and paper and pencil versions of the Raven Matrix test appear to be essentially equivalent (Calvert and Waterfall, 1982; Watts et al., 1982). This is important because the Raven

Metric test is widely considered a good measure of general intelligence.

The studies just cited involved homogeneous groups of subjects. It is possible that certain groups of subjects could be selectively favored or disfavored by computerized testing. The issue of motivation is central. Some observers have claimed, more or less without data, that computer controlled tests can be presented in a game-like format, and thus be self motivating. Such an effect could be specific to particular groups of individuals. Casual observation suggests that some people are indeed highly motivated by computer game formats. Others find man-computer interaction intimidating, boring, or both. Intuitively computer games are very much associated with the youth culture (Loftus and Loftus, 1983). Older people may view them with distaste. This is especially true if the testing procedure overtly measures speed of performance, for there is considerable evidence that older people dislike situations in which rapid responding is forced upon them (Munt and Hertzog, 1982). To further complicate the issue, there is evidence that points the other way. European studies have found that computerized tests are more acceptable to elderly and handicapped people than are paper and pencil tests (Carr et al., 1982;

Yatta, Baddeley, and Williams, 1982). Given the small data base, it would be inappropriate to conclude anything at all, yet, about the acceptability of computer-controlled testing in different populations.

The issue of motivation is closely related to the issue of prior experience. It is simply not true that "everyone" has or will have had extensive experience with computer terminals during the 1980s. A more realistic assessment is that different people will have very different experiences. Playing arcade games that are computer controlled is not like using a text editor to write term papers. Intuitively, experience with keyboards and terminals would be expected to affect performance in a testing situation. Marshall-Meier et al. (1983) found a correlation of .2 (in a sample of 500 subjects) between self-report of experience with computer games and performance on a variety of computer-administered tests. Is this so small as to be trivial? The examinees were electrical power system operators who had an average of over eight years experience with computer controlled displays. Clearly the issue is not closed!

In any case, it is well known that virtually any task that involves speeded reactions will show very large

learning effects. This raises two concerns. In assessing the comparability of scores from different groups, a frequent issue in psychometrics, care must be taken to ensure comparability of experience with the test apparatus. Within a single group, the presence of large learning effects raises the question of stability in factor patterns. If a battery of computerized tests is given repeatedly to the same people the mean values of the test scores will almost certainly change. Will the test coverages change? Will the correlations between test scores and outside criteria change? These issues are relevant for any testing program, but may be particularly important for any computerized testing that involves the measurement of reaction time.

One of the strongest arguments for computerized testing is that it makes possible adaptive adjustment of test difficulty to the examinee's talents. It is conceivable that such a testing procedure could interact with personality traits. Consider an individual who is of slightly below average talent. Adaptive testing would begin by presenting this person with items of average difficulty, which will prove too hard. The examinee will thus be given an initial series of failure experiences as the computer attempts to find an appropriate level of item

difficulty. Now suppose that the individual is also test anxious, a well identified personality trait (Barason, 1980). Will the failure experiences early in the test cause the person to under perform on the remaining items? We simply do not know.

There are two issues concerning testing in the abstract that revolve around the use of test results more than around the interaction between the examinee and the test administrator. Tests of cognitive ability are typically used for one of two purposes: personnel classification or diagnostic evaluation. In personnel classification the purpose of testing is to identify individuals who have (or lack) some degree of specific ability, so that these individuals may be offered or denied an assignment. College entrance examinations and Armed Services screening examinations are examples of classification tests. Classification testing is usually oriented toward the examination of broadly defined ability domains, such as verbal, spatial or reasoning skills. A relatively brief amount of time is devoted to gaining in-depth information about a person's ability within one of these domains. There is extensive predictive validity data showing that there is a correlation between test scores obtained in classification testing and similar

broad criterion variables, such as academic achievement or success in service technical training schools (Burns, 1975; Jensen, 1980). In assessing the validity of a classification method the appropriate criterion is a population one. Does the testing procedure justify itself by providing data that reduce the costs of misclassification below the cost of the test on?

Assumptions. Computerized tests have to show that they can meet this criterion, in competition with other methods of testing. Put another way, suppose that the correlation between a computer administered test and a paper and pencil test was 1.0. Then one should immediately decide to use the method of testing with the lowest administrative costs. This will seldom be the computer administered test.

The purpose of diagnostic testing is to gain a detailed knowledge of the pattern of performance of a specific individual. Absolute levels may be more important than levels relative to population norms. Neuropsychological examination is a prototype case; the purpose of the examination is not to select a person for entrance into a fixed environment but to design an environment for the individual. Other, less extreme examples can be envisaged. The scores to be obtained and

the criterion variables to be utilized will vary from case to case. The introduction of computers into diagnostic testing thus may pose a much more difficult problem in validation than in the case for classification testing. On the other hand, the flexibility of computer administered testing should provide a greater potential in the diagnostic than in the classification area.

Materazzo (1983) raised a somewhat different issue. He was concerned that the widespread availability of computer-administered tests of intelligence and personality might lead to misapplication or the results. Materazzo focused upon misinterpretation of and over-reliance on tests by naive users, simply because the tests were computerized. These issues, while real, are essentially issues that concern psychology as a professional guild rather than issues that are directly relevant to psychology as a science. Concerns about overall because something is on a computer are not qualitatively different from concerns about over-acceptance due to some other irrelevance, such as endorsement by a famous athlete or entertainer.

In discussing the scientific potentials for using

computers to test intelligence, we must first define what it is that we are trying to test. Initially we shall take the Boring (1923) view that intelligence is defined by the intelligence test. Accordingly, we should first consider how computers can be used to expand upon current testing of those psychological functions that are tested by present day methods. Such expansions are steps forward. We then take a leap into new areas, by suggesting some psychological functions that are logically part of mental competence, but are not tested by present day methods. In discussing both steps and leaps we have attempted to distinguish between questions of test development, given the present state of knowledge, and questions that require further psychological research.

Classification and Extension of Present Assessment Procedures

Although there are many taxonomies of human mental performance there is also considerable agreement about the major intellectual dimensions that must be assessed in order to evaluate mental competence. Three types of "intelligence" will be considered; verbal ability, spatial-visual ability, and logical reasoning. While

varying studies have found these abilities to be moderately correlated in most populations, they clearly represent distinct aspects of human thought (Carroll, 1982). We will also consider the evaluation of memory, as memory assessment is part of individually administered test batteries.

Verbal Ability

Modifying Current Assessment. "Verbal ability" refers to competence in comprehending linguistic messages. In order to exercise verbal ability one needs skills that go well beyond knowledge of word meanings. Nevertheless, on a statistical basis, people's ability to comprehend stories, utilize grammatical rules, and do other linguistic tasks are all well predicted by performance on a vocabulary test. (Carroll, 1979). Put another way, if we want to know what verbal ability is, we must consider many things besides word knowledge. If all that is desired is an estimate of a person's verbal facility, a vocabulary test will often suffice (Carroll, 1971, Hunt, in press).

One of the open questions in intelligence testing is whether people differ in the size or in the nature of their vocabularies. The opinions of experts differ dramatically. Nickerson (2) has stated that people differ

in their vocabularies by a factor of as much as two to one. On the other hand, Fillmore (1979) has stated that people do not differ very much in their total vocabulary size, but do differ in the sort of vocabularies they have. Neither Nickerson or Fillmore provide citations for their claims. Carroll, (1971) cited data indicating that there are large individual differences on common vocabulary tests but this does not settle the issue. In the traditional intelligence test a fairly small set of words is designated as "representatives" of word knowledge in general, and the examinee is tested on this set of words. Such a procedure implicitly accepts the idea that most of a person's vocabulary is drawn from a universe of standard words. If testing were done by a computer it would be possible to probe knowledge of specialized vocabularies, by drawing test items from a population of words chosen to reflect the examinee's presumed characteristics. To take a simple example, it would be possible to probe for word knowledge about cars, if the examinee claimed expertise as an automobile repairman, or for word knowledge about music, if the examinee claimed to a modern music fan.

This procedure will be called tailored vocabulary testing. Tailored vocabulary testing can separate the issue of the size and nature of a person's vocabulary. This could

be important. Acquisition of a vocabulary depends upon two things: culturally determined exposure to a particular lexicon and personal sensitivity to verbal stimuli in general. Logically these are separate traits. Present tests, by measuring standard (American) English vocabulary, are undeniably biased toward measuring cultural exposure. For this reason it can be claimed that the tests are "unfair". If so, why do vocabulary tests serve as useful predictors? It could be that, in spite of their cultural bias, the tests still depend enough upon individual verbal facility to be useful measures of the underlying psychological trait. On the other hand, it could be that in some circumstances the tests predict future behavior precisely because they measure cultural background (3). Arguments could be made for either conclusion. A testing approach that evaluated a person's use of both standard and specialized vocabularies would make it possible to investigate the issue further.

Interactions. The co-ordination of verbal and non-verbal input can be looked upon as a prototypical verbal action. Tasks that require the action will be called "co-ordination tasks". An example is the comparison of verbal descriptions to directly perceivable visual, auditory, or tactile displays. Following

Instructions often requires co-ordination; e.g. "Turn the knob to the left if the red light goes on." There are substantial individual differences both in the strategies that people use to co-ordinate verbal and non-verbal input, and in the effectiveness with which they execute those strategies (Bunt, 1980; in press). It appears that the sort of verbal ability tested by co-ordination tasks is partially independent of "verbal ability" as tested by tasks requiring only that people respond to isolated words (Bunt, Davidson, and Lessman, 1981).

Most of the experimental paradigms used to study the co-ordination of verbal and non-verbal information rely on computer presentation. Physically, it would be easy to adapt them for psychometric testing. Two examples are the analysis-facilitation and instruction-following paradigms. In sentence verification the examinee must decide whether or not a verbal statement correctly describes a picture. The complexity of the verbal statement can be systematically manipulated (Carpenter and Just, 1975). In testing the ability to follow instructions, the examinee is told to execute actions contingent upon presentation of certain displays. Again the variable of interest is the examinee's response to changes in the linguistic complexity of the instructions.

rather than to changes in stimulus or response complexity itself (Dixes, 1980). The instruction following paradigm is of interest because it tests the comprehension of verbally stated procedures. Most present day verbal tests evaluate the comprehension of expository material.

There are a number of practical psychometric issues to be resolved before either of these paradigms could be introduced into testing situations. They revolve around test-retest reliability, across time periods and across likely variations in testing situations. Such questions fall somewhere between "basic" research and "developmental studies", but they must be answered before we know whether or not it is practical to test people's ability to do co-ordination tasks. Similar points will arise frequently in our subsequent discussion.

Several computer-controlled procedures have been developed for use in the study of verbal comprehension process in general. Some of these involve highly intrusive measurement devices, such as instruments for recording eye movements. These are probably not practical testing devices. A number of other laboratory paradigms involve what is called the secondary task methodology. The mental effort required to execute a linguistic task

(e.g. parse a passive sentence) is measured by the ease of execution of an ancillary simple task, such as phoneme monitoring. Individual differences can be evaluated using the secondary task paradigm, but doing so requires an elaborate experimental design that is probably not practical in most testing situations (Huet and Labasan, 1982).

Rapid single visual presentation (RSVP) is a technique for reading in which readers comprehend a message that is presented visually, one word at a time (Potter, Kruell and Morris, 1980). The rate of presentation can be controlled either by the reader or the examiner. To our knowledge the RSVP technique has not been used to evaluate individual differences in the dynamics of comprehension, such as changes in the rate of reading as a function of the complexity of textual material. It might be that RSVP could be adapted for computerized testing, but a great deal of work remains to be done to establish appropriate testing procedures. The RSVP technique seems particularly appropriate in situations in which the diagnosis of reading style is an issue.

Conclusion: Computer controlled testing is not

likely to extend the range of evaluation of verbal ability in classification situations; if only because the simple vocabulary test is such a good predictor. Therefore any justification for computerizing verbal classification procedures will have to rest on cost effectiveness. Computer controlled testing may prove much more useful in diagnosing individual comprehension skills. Such testing may be quite valuable if there is reason to believe that the examinees have been exposed to some condition that would affect the non-lexical aspects of verbal processing. For example, a variety of reports have indicated that age deleteriously affects the attention demanding, speeded aspects of verbal processing, although vocabulary size probably increases with age (Hunt and Berzog, 1981). Specific reading disabilities in schoolchildren involve selective loss of the ability to deal with particular aspects of written material (Vellutino, 1979). Even more dramatic selective losses of function are sometimes seen in cases of brain injury. Prototype computer-controlled testing procedures for various aspects of reading comprehension have been developed (Frederiksen, 1982). These could be developed to deal with situations where large scale, rapid diagnosis of language deficiencies were required.

Mental-Spatial Ability

Multidimensional Assessment. The term "spatial ability" refers to the ability to construct, examine, and manipulate mental representations of visual displays. Examples of standard spatial ability tests are the Minnesota Paper Form Board test, the Primary Mental Abilities "spatial" test, and the Kohs Block Design test (McGee 1979). The well known "mental rotation" paradigm developed by Shepard and his colleagues (Shepard and Cooper, 1983) have also inspired some more specific tests of spatial ability (Laneman et al., 1982; Vandenberg and Kuse, 1978). The domain of abilities covered by spatial tests is reasonably well fit by a two factor model (Egan, 1979). One factor, "spatial encoding", is an ability to recognize a specified shape when it occurs in the visual field. Examples of encoding tasks are recognizing letters in a word or recognizing the triangles embedded in a six pointed Star of David. The manipulation of a mental image is a rather different ability. It is best illustrated by the rotation tasks developed by Shepard and his associates. A more prosaic example is the mental rotation of letters when reading a text that is presented upside

down. We will refer to the ability to manipulate images as "visualisation", although this is perhaps not the best term.

Computerized testing methods offer a considerable potential for expanding the evaluation of spatial ability. Most present spatial-visual tests mix the encoding and visualisation factors. Pellegrino and his associates (Human and Pellegrino, in press; Pellegrino and Kail, 1982) have shown that it is possible to obtain pure measures of both the visualisation and encoding factors within the framework of a single test. This is done by presenting successive complications upon a single base problem (e.g. a form board completion item) in ways that increase the difficulty of the base problem along either the encoding or visualisation dimension. The item construction procedures developed by Pellegrino et al. could easily be combined with the response analysis procedures based on multicomponent latent trait theory (Whitley, 1981) and upon adaptive testing. This is an example of how the computer technology offers a chance to make a solid step forward in our evaluation methods.

Our Directions

Our present ideas about spatial ability are based upon data that can be gathered using the fixed format,

Paper and pencil testing technique. The paper and pencil format is much more restrictive in the spatial than the verbal domain, because the mapping between the dynamic, three dimensional, colored world and the two dimensional, static, (largely) black and white printed diagram is not as tight as the mapping between listening and reading. Hence there is a real potential for expanding our concept of spatial ability by adopting a new testing format. In particular, computer controlled displays can be dynamic. This is an important distinction, because spatial abilities are thought to be involved in tasks in which motion is an inherent part of the environment, e.g., operating a vehicle or an aircraft. It would be relatively easy to test the ability to perceive and extrapolate motion directly by using computer controlled animated displays. Is the ability to deal with motion really predictable from our present static tests of spatial ability? If not, would measuring it add to our ability to predict performance in tasks that we believe require spatial ability?

Traditional spatial ability tests deal with the ability to look at a display. What about the ability to orient oneself to the surroundings? We will refer to this as "geographic orientation." Although there is evidence that people vary widely in their ability to maintain

geographic orientation (Thorndyke and Goldin, 1981) there is little systematic knowledge of the dimensions of the ability. The paucity of data may be due to the sheer economics of testing. Studies of geographic orientation require that people move about in the environment. Is it possible to conduct geographic orientation studies less expensively, by using computer controlled technology? People could be provided with the visual input from imaginary walks or drives, by combining computer controlled testing with the use of a random access video disk device. They could then be tested on their knowledge of the geography that they had experienced vicariously. Would the same people who did well in reconstructing the simulated geography do well at maintaining their orientation if they were moved through a real environment? The experiments need to answer this question are again straightforward. The answer itself is important because of its implication for future research. If orientation in the simulated environment correlates with orientation in the actual environment, then performance in the simulated environment could be used either as a predictor of actual environment or as a means of studying geographic orientation ability, or as a means of studying the relation between orientation and conventional measures of spatial ability.

The above examples have concentrated on the spatial.

part of spatial-visual ability. Gopher (3) has pointed out that many (though not all) of the classical visual illusions can be tested using computer generated displays. Several of these illusions are thought to indicate basic properties or higher order perceptual systems. To illustrate, Correa and Giuris (1978) have shown that there are individual differences in susceptibility to various perceptual illusions, such as the Muller-Lyer illusion. The dimensionality of the space of susceptibility is considerably less than the number of illusions. Some of the factors of susceptibility seem to be related to peripheral visual processes, while others seem to be associated with higher order, cognitive factors. Very little is known about how susceptibility to illusions relate to other dimensions of intellectual or personality variation. (A striking exception to this statement is the very large literature on field dependency and rod-and-frame illusion (Witkin et al., 1954). If computer generated illusions can be produced reliably this could be a fruitful field of research. (4).

Conclusion : The advent of computer controlled testing should considerably expand our ability to examine spatial-visual abilities. Enough research has already been done to warrant beginning the construction and validation of computer-oriented tests. Studies intended

to expand our conceptualization of spatial ability to include dynamic visualizations and geographic orientation could have an extremely high pay off. The extension of testing into the realm of perceptual illusions is more venturesome, but is worth considering.

References

HODGKIN, GENEVIEVE. Reasoning. In traditionally divided into two areas: deductive and inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning requires that a general principle be applied to a particular case, whereas inductive reasoning involves extraction of a general rule or principle from examination of cases. Tests of reasoning have been widely used in the study of intelligence. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, deductive reasoning has been seen as the hallmark of rational thought (Johnson-Laird, 1983).

Inductive reasoning (including analogical reasoning) has

been shown to be among the best markers for the general ("g") factor in modern intelligence tests (Sternberg, 1977). This is intuitively reasonable, for a good argument can be made that the essence of intelligence is being able to transfer problem solving techniques learned in one situation to other, analogous situations.

During the 1970s and early 1980s considerable progress was made in understanding the psychological basis of both inductive and deductive reasoning. There are now several, rather similar models of how people represent various types of reasoning problems to themselves, and of how these representations are manipulated during problem solving. (Goldman and Pellegrino, 1984; Johnson-Laird and Steedman, 1978; Rips, 1983; Sternberg, 1977-1980, 1982). These models provide good explanations of why particular reasoning problems are easy or hard, and they identify microprocesses that must be executed in order to solve an inductive or deductive problem. The models could be used to design reasoning problems that vary systematically along known psychological dimensions, in much the same manner as was suggested for spatial tests. Obviously, computer testing techniques could be used in such an effort, but the effort itself does not require computers (see e.g., Molenaar, Pellegrino and Glaser, 1983).

The cause for this conclusion is worth examining. Reasoning is, by definition, the task of operating upon an internal, conceptual representation of a problem. The computer provides a facility for displaying different problem formats, but this should only affect the process of constructing the conceptual representation, not the process of manipulating it. Reasoning is also a process that often takes place over minutes rather than milliseconds, and our interest typically centers on errors as much as speed of reaction. While reaction time measures can be useful in testing models that identify components of solution during reasoning tasks,

(Sternberg's 1977) it is unclear whether or not reaction time measures of component processes of reasoning are sufficiently reliable to be useful in brief tests of a person's reasoning power (Goldman and Pellegrino, 1982). Thus the contribution of computerization to classification tests of reasoning is problematical.

Computerized testing may have more of a place when testing is done for diagnostic purposes. Reasoning problems are typically attacked in stages; encoding the elements of a problem, applying trial solutions, and evaluating solutions. Different strategies stress one or the other of these stages. Furthermore, success in

problem solving appears to be related to the choice of a strategy. Sternberg and his associates have consistently found that good problem solvers spend relatively more time reading a problem and understanding the elements involved, whereas poorer problem solvers seem to begin trying out solutions (Sternberg, 1982). Dillon and Stevenson-Hinde (1981) have reported differences in strategies of problem solving. When good problem solvers take multiple choice reasoning tests, they examine the problem, develop a solution, and then look for the solution in the set of answers. Poorer problem solvers spend more time examining and rejecting the alternatives provided in the answer set. Note that the former strategy generalizes beyond the multiple choice test format, while the latter strategy does not. Finally, Egan and Grimes-Farrow (1982) have shown that people who adopt an abstract propositional representation are more successful in solving transitivity problems than are people who adopt a concrete representation (e.g. visualizing the relative heights of people). A variety of interactive computer controlled testing procedures could be used to identify a person's style of problem solving, and perhaps to arrange ways of improving on it. But is this a good idea? The research cited shows that different problem solving styles exist. It does not show how stable a person's problem solving

style is over different occasions, or different situations. The problem of situational generality is of particular interest.

New Directions. From the viewpoint of a logician, the rules for inductive and deductive problem solving apply regardless of the context area. Psychologically context is far from neutral. Sternberg (1980) has pointed out that there are two stages of problem solving: knowing abstract problem solving methods and knowing when to apply them. The ability to realize that the problem solving method is appropriate may be much rarer than the ability to apply a method in a familiar area. For example, mental retardates can be trained to apply problem solving procedures, but the application is tightly tied to the context in which it is learned (Campione, Brous, and Ferrara, 1982). Cross cultural examples are also plentiful. Indeed, it seems that the idea that there are abstract reasoning procedures, apart from a particular context, is a peculiarly Western idea, that is acquired through contact with formal Western schooling (Sorribas, 1977).

Sternberg (1981) has recently advocated testing people's ability to reason, in the abstract, by testing

their ability to deal with problems presented in what are almost bizarre settings. An example is a problem about people who grew young instead of old. He has referred to the ability to deal with such situations as the ability to reason in 'non-reinforced' situations. One can envisage a computer-controlled testing situation in which a person's reasoning ability was examined both in settings with which the examinee was familiar and in more foreign settings. A related procedure would be to examine people's ability to use hints to suggest fruitful analogies in problem solving. This technique could be used to provide a finer analysis of the differences between individuals than the discrimination between 'solvers' and 'non solvers.'

Virtually every discussion of reasoning closes with a rather ill defined section on 'problem solving.' Computer programs can be written to present quite challenging problem solving tasks—e.g. the ubiquitous 'dungeons and dragons' games advertised extensively in computer journals. Could these games be used to test problem solving skills? Although the idea is appealing, the idea does not always work. Tries to solve a realistic computer-presented problem in electric power distribution correlated only $- .16$ ($N=3841$) with supervisors' ratings of power system operators (Marshall-Miles, 1983).

This discouraging result can be used as an illustration of a prosaic but important point. The concerns about test length and item reliability that are routinely dealt with in conventional testing are also concerns in computer-administered testing. If a test consists of only a few items, as in Marshall-Miles et al.'s use of a single problem, then it is unreasonable to expect that the test will be reliable. On the other hand, if there are many items, it is possible to produce a very reliable test even though each item has a substantial item-specific component (Green, 1981). Since reasoning and problem solving tasks are frequently found to have a considerable amount of item-specific variance, extended testing is essential if one wants to evaluate a person's general problem solving or reasoning ability. To drive this point home, consider a study by Sternberg and Gardner (1983), that reliably evaluated people's ability to execute particular components of a reasoning strategy. Such an evaluation could be regarded as the ultimate goal of diagnostic testing. Sternberg and Gardner's participants solved over one thousand problems each! This illustrates how serious the problem of item reliability is.

Computerized. Can computer-controlled testing help by speeding up item presentation and response evaluation? Speeding up these functions of test administration would be only marginally useful. The limiting factor on speed of reasoning is almost always the speed with which people think, not the speed with which the problem is presented to them. If there is to be a synergism between computerized testing and the evaluation of reasoning, it will be based on a sophisticated method for diagnosing problem solving strategies.

Memory

Memory evaluation has always been part of individually administered psychological tests. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) contains a memory subscale and a memory quotient score in addition to the more familiar intelligence quotient. (Matarazzo, 1972) In spite of their ubiquitousness, the memory scales used in psychometric tests are simplistic compared to the measures of memory that are routinely utilized by experimental psychologists and neuropsychologists. The WAIS scale itself is inadequate to differentiate among types of amnesia, even though the instrument is frequently used to diagnose the amnesia syndrome (Mirat, 1982).

The problem seems to be that the psychometric measures are, for the most part, based on a naive view of human memory. Conventional memory subscales focus on the global functioning of two memory systems, very long term ("permanent") memory for facts; and memory span, the capacity to recall, exactly, material presented within the last minute or so. A more modern view of memory requires testing of at least three systems; the two described above and a third, working memory, that contains a general representation of the current situation without necessarily containing an exact record of all details of the information that has been presented (Baddeley, 1976; Hunt, 1971; Klepp, Marchburn, and Lester, 1983). Furthermore, most experimental psychologists would be unsatisfied with simple measures of capacity. In addition they would like to have a measure of the speed of retrieval from various memory systems and some measure of the rate of transfer of information between systems.

Procedures for estimating such parameters are routinely used in experimental psychology today. Many of the procedures demand the sort of control that can be achieved only by computerised testing. Furthermore, at least some of the measures are related to memory

functioning in extra-laboratory situations (Sunderland, Harris, and Baddeley, 1983). Thus there is clearly a potential for expanding present methods of assessing memory in a way that would not be feasible using conventional testing methods. However, more is required than simply adding experimental paradigms into a testing battery. The paradigms generally have been designed to estimate group parameters. Whether or not they are sufficiently reliable to be used on an individual basis remains to be shown. Furthermore, most of the experimental paradigms demand much more time from an individual subject than would be available in classification testing situations. Finally, a person's apparent memory capability may depend heavily upon a person's familiarity with the content of the information being memorized. It appears that people will develop content-specificised frameworks for dealing with information that they encounter repetitively. To take an extreme example, Chase and Ericsson (1981) report the case of an individual who had a memory span for numbers in excess of eighty (!), because he had developed a special technique for memorizing numbers. His memory span for other material was in the normal range.

Results such as Chase and Ericsson's pose a serious

question about the evaluation of memory. Is memorization ability a stable characteristic of the individual, or is it a product of the interaction between the individual's capabilities and his or her specific experience? Theorists are clearly divided on this point. Consider such a basic point as the development of short term memory. Some have argued that the development of an ever increasing short term memory capability is the cornerstone of cognitive development. Others have argued that the apparent growth in memory is due to growth in the child's knowledge of memory strategies and due to a widened familiarity with useful, content-specific codes. (Siegler and Richards, 1982). The controversy is important in its own right. It is important to the development of computerized testing, because the testing procedure should be based on a clearer idea of what is being evaluated.

Posing the issue as a contrast between theories of 'generalized memory ability' and 'situation specific memory' is too simplistic. It is clear that if clinically normal individuals are given special training, so that they develop 'expertise' within a certain area, then their ability to remember information in that content area will be selectively improved. However, it is possible to develop tests of unfamiliar expertise or arbitrary

material. Most of the paradigms developed in the experimental laboratory are of this type. A substantial study of performance on such tasks in a college student population (Gaderudd, Boruch, and Malai, 1978) found that a very large percentage of the variance on all tasks could be accounted for by a general associative memory factor. This finding suggests that one or two sensory tests would suffice to estimate general sensory performance in a variety of situations.

The problem is thornier when 'exceptional' memory is to be assessed. The issues involved in evaluating exceptionally good or exceptionally bad memory are quite different. Extremely poor memory is usually associated with some pathological condition, such as Alzheimer's disease, senility, or brain injury. Testing the affected individual is necessarily a form of clinical interview. Computer-controlled presentation provides a chance to standardize the interview, which has some advantages, but the testing procedure will probably always be an adjunct to individual patient assessment by a clinician. The role of computer controlled testing in the assessment of superior memory is rather different. As has already been pointed out, computer controlled testing is flexible, so that within a fixed time it would be possible to test a

given individual's memory for more different content areas, than could be evaluated using conventional testing. The remarks made earlier about tailored vocabulary testing are applicable. Thus computerized testing would be useful in identifying the fact that a person had superior sensory for certain types of material.

What would be hard to do is to establish why an unusually good memory capacity existed. Superior sensory capacity is generally associated with the use of elaborative strategies that are appropriate to the material being memorized. (See Bradford et al., 1982 for a good discussion of this point and for a list of further citations.) There are a few situations in which strategies can be inferred from computer-analyzable responses, such as reaction times (MacLeod, Hunt, and Mathews, 1978) or eye movements (Dillon and Stevenson-Nicks, 1981). In general, though, the best way to evaluate a person's sensory strategy is to ask the examinee to describe it, and then have an experimenter analyse a complex verbal response. While advances in computer comprehension of freely produced speech have been made, it seems unlikely that computers will be prepared to replace the experimenter in the near future.

New Dimensions of Testing

Learning, attention, and psychomotor skills are certainly aspects of mental competence. However, they are not usually evaluated in intelligence testing. Does computerized testing offer a chance to expand evaluation into these fields?

Learning

Definitions of what "the intelligent person" can do almost always include learning (Sternberg et al., 1981). Intelligence tests make relatively little effort to assess learning directly, because of the difficulty of doing so using a conventional test format. Since many of the paradigms used in laboratory studies of learning now utilize computer-controlled experimental procedures, the advent of cheaper computing offers the technological possibility of assessing an individual's rate of learning. For example, it would be possible to observe a person's learning rate in situations as different as learning to recite lists presented via computer or learning to play a video arcade game.

Experimental studies of the feasibility of such testing have already been reported as part of an attempt to develop new military classification procedures. (5) Such proposals presuppose the existence of learning ability independent of content areas. The evidence for this proposition is far from clear. The assessment of learning ability raises a number of issues that transcend the narrower issue of computerised testing. It is instructive to see how the larger issues and the specific ones interact.

Issues of hierarchy. Gates (1982), in a perceptive review of the issues, has suggested that the 'simple and' are best ordered by complexity. At the 'simple end' are studies of habituation and conditioning. Instrumental learning (operant conditioning) and paired-associates paradigms, are more complicated, while concept identification and verbal learning paradigms can be very complex. At the extreme, one could regard any education as a form of learning. Here the distinction between learning and induction becomes arbitrary.

The simpler learning paradigms, such as habituation and conditioning paradigms, attempt to isolate the formation of elementary stimulus-response bonds. As Gates (and others) have pointed out, studies of extreme contrasts as the contrast between mildly mentally retarded

and normal individuals have not shown particularly striking relations between performance in simple learning situations and measures of general intellectual competence. Thus such paradigms will not be considered further.

The problem of evaluating a person's ability to learn complex material is complicated by three factors. When new facts are learned they are fitted into a person's existing information. Therefore any evaluation of a person's ability to learn material with meaningful content will interact with the examinee's prior knowledge. A determination that a person is a rapid learner of material in history may have little predictive value for estimating the person's ability to learn auto mechanics. Since learning is highly dependent on memory, the research about individual differences in memorization strategies apply.

Because individual differences in knowledge and strategies of information acquisition interact, a person's learning ability may best be evaluated by constructing a model of how the learner conceptualizes the learning problem. There have been attempts to develop computer programs that do this, by observing students' responses to computer controlled presentations of material to be learned (Brown, and Burton, 1978; Collies, 1975; Slaeman, 1983).

Considerable research needs to be done before these programs are sufficiently validated so that their results could be used in personnel selection or diagnosis. In fact, the time required to induce a model of the learner may rule out the use of such student evaluation devices in classification situations.

Time considerations are much less important if assessment is coincident with education. Testing can be embedded within computer assisted instruction programs, so that evaluation and learning proceed hand in hand. This approach also has the advantage of tying assessment directly to the learning of material that presumably has value in its own right. Those instructional programs that attempt to develop models of the learner (see above) could be regarded as sophisticated teaching and assessment situations.

Procedural learning. These above conclusions are based largely on studies of the learning of verbal or quasi-verbal material. Learning also takes place in situations in which the task is to classify and respond to perceptual displays. Here the extra-laboratory analog is to machinery operation, surveillance of radar screens, or even to athletic performance. Studies of experts in such fields indicate that a great deal of their performance is

involving intense social interaction between the examiner and the person being evaluated. (This is especially the case in Peurstein's work.) Recently, though, some of the testing procedures have been adopted for computer administration (Campione, Note 7).

The apparent contradiction between the work of Peurstein and Campione et al., on the one hand, and the other studies cited may be due to the population tested. It could well be that there are significant individual differences in generalized learning ability amongst slow learners, while learning might depend more on specific prior knowledge in normal and rapid learners. This important issue is not directly related to the issue of the use of computers to assess learning ability. The answer to the question has strong implications for the design of computer programs intended to assess that ability.

Psychomotor Skills

Intuitively, it makes sense to speak of people who are clever with their hands. On the other side of the coin, the evaluation of psychomotor skills is almost completely absent from current psychological testing. In

part, this may be because it is hard to include a test of tool manipulation in a standard paper and pencil testing situation. One could imagine psychomotor tests that could be administered by a computer. The simplest example would be some form of tracking using an electronic 'mouse', a light pen, or a similar pointing device. Other tests of tool use could no doubt be devised. Would there be any point in doing so?

Psychomotor skills tend to be highly specialised and to be very sensitive to practice (Hoult and Beauchamp, 1981). Computer games that require psychomotor skills exhibit low session to session reliability until after ten or fifteen days of training (Kennedy, Carter, and Pittner, 1980). Finally, it has long been known that the relative importance of different components of a psychomotor skill may change with the state of practice (Fleishman, 1967). These findings all suggest that there is no general factor for psychomotor co-ordination. If this is true, then the fact that psychomotor tasks can be administered by computer is somewhat irrelevant to testing except to evaluate the results of specific training sequences.

There is a possible exception to this conclusion. It has been claimed that the speed of a person's cognitive

decision processes can be revealed by the speed of simple discriminations and/or response choices. Jensen (1982). Examples are the much used choice reaction time paradigm, in which a person must move one of N switches when a light is shown over it and a variety of measures of speed of retrieval of information from long term memory. These tasks require computer presentation because of the need to control stimulus presentation and record response times at millisecond accuracy.

Should the speed of simple but rapid tests be included in a screening battery? The answer to this question depends upon two familiar psychometric issues: stability and external validity. The reliability of individual choice reaction times across sessions, is rather low (approximately .6). This contrasts with their extremely high (.95) intra-session reliability. Such a discrepancy indicates that choice reaction time measures may be subject to intra-subject influences that vary from day to day. Whether day to day variations in a person's reaction times mirror variation in other cognitive behavior is simply not known. (The answer to this question would be interesting). Given the fact of inter-session variation, it is somewhat surprising to find that the correlation between choice reaction times and more complex tasks is as high as it is.

Several studies have shown that choice reaction times are reliably correlated with tests of the "g" factor of conventional intelligence testing (Hust, 1978; Jensen and Munro, 1979; Vernon, 1983). We caution, though, that the correlations (.2 to .4) are not sufficiently high to argue that this test should be used as a marker of general intelligence. Much less is known of the relation between complex behavior and perceptive discrimination speed. There is a sketchy report of a very high correlation between measured intelligence and speed of visual discrimination (Brand, 1981), but subsequent work has failed to replicate the original study (Bettisbeck and Kirby, 1983; Vernon, 1983). The problems of controlling for simple sensory deficits, such as astigmatism or myopia, have apparently not been studied.

Only a weak case can be made for using choice reaction time and perceptual discrimination speed as measures of psychological functions that are also measured by present day psychometric tests. In part this is a problem of definitions. If one is willing to accept, say, the Raven Matrix test as a definition of general intelligence, why replace the matrix test with another

carried out in what has come to be known as the "automated mode" of performing. Reactions to displays are overlearned and immediate. This is contrasted to the clever and attention demanding "controlled" mode of responding. The somewhat intuitive distinction between automated and controlled responding has been operationally defined by Schneider and Shiffrin (1977), in a series of experiments on the development of automated responding to visual displays. They found that automated responding could take literally thousands of trials to develop, but that when it did develop, responses might be as much as an order of magnitude faster than responses made in the controlled mode. Subsequent studies (Fisk and Schneider, 1983; Peltrecek, Lannan and Hunt, 1982) have shown that the automated-controlled distinction applies to a variety of item recognition situations, quite outside the narrow area of visual display recognition. Since the techniques for evaluating automated and controlled responding require very rapid presentations of stimuli and recording of responses, some form of computer control is necessary. Could the experimental procedures be adopted to testing situations?

There are two basic questions that one would ask in studying individual differences in automated and

controlled responding. Given a number of candidates for training on a task, which candidates are likely to develop automated responding early in training? Given a number of people who have already been trained to execute the task, which persons have developed to the stage of automatic responding? The first question is more interesting from the viewpoint of personnel selection, but unfortunately it may be the more difficult to answer. The straightforward way to ask the question would be to present candidates with a (computer controlled) simulation of the task to be learned...or perhaps with the task itself...and observe changes in performance over a relatively small number of learning trials. If learning rates early in training predict learning rates throughout training the approach should work. But do they? Here the evidence is mixed.

Schneider (Note 6) has presented data showing that learning performance early in training on a task analogous to interpreting a radar display is not predictive either of asymptotic performance or of the time required to learn an automated skill. Schneider studied a simple visual scanning task, analogous to the interpretation of a display on a radar screen. A somewhat similar design was used by Dunlap, Billedau, and Jones (in press), but in their case the tasks were commercial video

games that appear to involve visual scanning, target identification, and motor reactions. The factor structure of the tasks changed very little over extended practice.

It is relatively easy to determine whether or not an individual has been able to automate performance on a specific task. Automation is defined by insensitivity of performance to increases in information processing loads. Computerized evaluation procedures could be developed to monitor sensitivity to information load at different stages of a person's training. The evaluation procedures could be specific to the task at hand, rather than being general indices of individual trainability. In general, the automated-control distinction seems to be more relevant to evaluating the success of a training program, than for predicting the success of a given individual entering that program.

The Proximal Zone of Development If learning is situation specific, it makes sense to build assessment into specific computer controlled teaching programs, but it makes less sense to try to develop comprehensive procedures for evaluating learning ability in general. There are those who would dissent with this viewpoint. The dissenters believe that there is a general learning factor

that applies to more cognitive situations, such as learning how to solve problems in mathematics or reading. A central idea in their view is the concept of a person's "proximal zone of development." Loosely, people who have wide proximal zones are people who are able to utilize hints to learn how to solve unfamiliar problems. The concept was originally introduced by Vygotsky (English translation 1970), in the 1930s, and appears to have influenced Soviet personnel evaluation. The idea, although not the language, is similar to Sternberg's (1981) notion that one should distinguish between a person's ability to do familiar (reinforced) tasks and his or her ability to deal with novel, non-reinforced problem solving. Outside of the Soviet Union, Vygotsky's ideas has been translated into action in a number of programs in which children's potentials are assessed by giving them progressively more hints until they can solve test problems. The idea is that the child is simultaneously being trained to be a problem solver and being evaluated for the ability to deal with novelty. The word "child" is used advisedly here, as all the programs that we are aware of are directed toward children, and often abnormal children at that (Caspiosa et al., 1982; Feurstein, 1980).

At present the task of evaluating a person's potential for learning is conceived of as an almost clinical interview.

test that either takes as long, or has only a moderate correlation with the accepted test, or both? A more interesting approach is to regard information processing speed as an extension of the abilities now tested. If it could be shown that adding the measures to a test battery improved the predictability of performance in some class of complex task then an expansion of testing would be appropriate.

Attention

Spearman (1927) suggested that the general factor in intelligence might in part be due to pervasive individual differences in one's ability to concentrate attention on the problem at hand. Several other writers have echoed Spearman's comment. For instance, Matarazzo (1972) asserted that in normal adults the chief use of the sensory organs in the Wechsler Intelligence Scale was to test the examinee's ability to concentrate. In spite of such claims, early writers on intelligence offered little empirical evidence relating intelligence to attention.¹ The failure to develop the idea was partly due to the difficulty of monitoring a person's attentional effort, given the constraints of conventional testing situations.

It was also partly due to a failure to be precise about what was meant by "attention."²

Since 1970 the concept of attention has been articulated more clearly. The most common view is to look upon attention as a resource, analogous to electrical power. Some authors argue for a single, pervasive "power source" for thought (Rahmenen, 1973). While others have presented models that postulate two or more sources of non-interchangeable resources (Koren and Gopher, 1979; Wickens, 1979), or competition for limited capacity (Bunt, 1981; Posner, 1981).

Information processing mechanisms (Bunt, 1981; Posner, 1978). In all cases, though, resource expenditure is measured by observing patterns of interference between two tasks. Consider two tasks, X and Y, both of which demand attention. Examples are pursuit tracking and monitoring a stream of signals to detect the presence of a target. If the tasks cannot be executed together as well as each can be done alone, then the two tasks must compete for the same resources. The pattern of interference can provide a measure of the amount of attentional resources expended in such situations (Kerr, 1973; Norman and Bobrow, 1975).

Two paradigms have been used to study individual differences in the deployment of attention. Both depend on

one form of computer control for measuring reaction time and errors on a real-time basis. In the "secondary task" paradigm people are given two tasks singly, and then asked to perform them together. In "switching" or "filtering" paradigms people must either switch from monitoring one source of input to monitoring another (e.g. switch from monitoring signals in one ear to monitoring signals presented to the other) or they must monitor one signal source while ignoring another. The presence of a secondary task may introduce a source of individual variation that is not apparent when people perform tasks singly. This could be either because the increased demands of the secondary task provide an accurate measure of the total attentional resources available to a person (Hunt and Langman, 1982) or because there are reliable individual differences in the ability to allocate attention to competing tasks (Stanckov, 1983).

A somewhat different view of attention stresses the control a person has over attention allocation, rather than the total amount of attentional resources available. Gopher (1982) has developed this idea extensively using a dichotic listening paradigm. The examinee listens to the dichotically presented streams of signals. On cue s/he must switch rapidly from attending to the information

presented in one ear to attending to information presented in the other. The dependent variable is the speed with which the switch of attention can be executed. Several studies have shown that the attention switching paradigm can be used to discriminate between skilled and less skilled operators of a variety of machines, ranging from buses to airplanes. The correlations are not large, and the validity of prediction may depend upon the examinee's familiarity with the criterion task. On the other hand, the classification decisions being made in these situations may involve substantial economic commitment. (This is certainly the case in pilot training.) Therefore even small increases in predictability can be valuable.

Given the data now in hand, measures of attentional resources and control warrant serious consideration for inclusion in some classification tests, especially if the goal is to predict performance in situations where rapid decision making is required. The way that a test should be used, though, will depend very much upon the particular situation, because there are a number of theoretical and practical questions to be resolved. Perhaps the most important of these is the issue of situational generality of attention measures. Consider Gopher's procedure. The paradigm involves auditory perception, but is presented as

a test of the ability to control attention in general. A recent study by Lannan, Poltrack, and Hunt (1983) indirectly questions this assumption. College students took a variety of auditory and visual tests that required the control of attention. There was evidence for separate factors for control of auditory and visual attention, rather than for a general "attentional control" factor. While Gopher's test was not among those used by Lannan et al., their results do suggest that further studies should be done to determine the factorial complexity of 'attention' itself.

Attention is said to 'wax and wane', thus implying that it is subject to day to day, and perhaps minute to minute variability. While variability might be of interest in itself, (See the remarks above concerning reaction time), any test to test variability poses administrative problems, because extended testing is required. Design problems are also posed because the investment of attention is no more directly observable than is the investment of intelligence. Attention is evaluated by performance on a task. Individual differences in skill on the task are confounded with individual differences on the amount of attention devoted to it. This very much complicates the designs required to

isolate measures of attention from measures of task specific skills (Ackerman, Nickens, Schneider, 1982; Hunt and Lannan, 1982). Design issues, rather than technology, may prove the limiting feature in efforts to evaluate attentional capabilities. Nevertheless, given the data now in hand, we regard the extension of testing to the evaluation of individual differences in attention as one of the most promising applications of computer controlled testing.

The Criteria Issue

Validation is one of the thorniest problems in assessment. What psychologists would like to do is to talk about the relation between test scores and "performance" in some extra-laboratory task. Establishing extra-laboratory performance is usually a substantial problem. Very few aspects of everyday life are evaluated in anything like an objective manner. Perhaps the easiest situation to deal with is the prediction of academic performance, where grades are regularly assigned. Yet anyone only mildly familiar with academics is uncomfortable with grade point averages as an evaluation of student performance. The situation is even worse in the workplace, where competence must often be measured by

such surrogates as economic reward or observer ratings, variables that are subject to influences other than general ability. From a narrow point of view, the validation problem for computer presented tests is no different than the validation problem for any other test. The problem lies in the validation score, not the test score.

Computers could be used to collect measures of human behavior in extra-laboratory situations. The most obvious, and perhaps the most controversial, use is to monitor individual work performance. This is feasible in industries where computer readable records are already used for management control of inventories, customer flow, or other resources. Examples are check-out counters in supermarkets, air traffic control centers, and airplane ticket sales. The recording devices used to keep track of goods or paperwork could be used to estimate human productivity. Such an application raises serious social issues, which we shall not comment upon. We do point out that, seen strictly from the viewpoint of a psychologist interested in assessment, keeping records on individual workers in their normal work environment is an attractive solution to some of the problems that have plagued psychometricians for years. Because the measures would be

directly related to work, they would be face valid. There is a danger, of course, that measures that could be recorded would assume a "psychological validity" that they ought not have, to the expense of other, less easily recorded aspects of performance, but this argument could be made against the collection of any less-than-perfect performance measure. A second feature of continuous monitoring is that it records normal performance. Overt testing, on the other hand, is likely to yield measures of (near) maximal performance. The prediction of average performance may be much more important in the workplace. In the past, little work has been done on this because somewhat paradoxically, average performance is more difficult to assess in an objective manner than is peak performance.

In training situations many of the advantages of continuous assessment can be retained without incurring some of the social disadvantages. This is particularly true if the training is to be conducted using simulation techniques that are themselves under computer control, since it may be easier to include computer monitoring of performance in a simulated task than in an actual task.

The combination of assessment with computer

controlled simulation may represent an important extension of testing to the workplace. Simulations are becoming increasingly popular training devices, especially in situations where training on the criterion task itself is not feasible. Furthermore, simulation training sessions are less artificial than test situations. A test must be relatively brief and must be meaningful for untrained people. A simulation task may take hours, and it may be practical to train people for several days before they can operate the simulator. Simulator performance itself must be evaluated against actual performance. Once this is done, though, the simulator stands at an intermediate point between brief, inexpensive testing and the expensive, error prone evaluation of extra-laboratory performance. It may be economically feasible to screen candidate tests by examining the correlation between test and simulator performance. Tests that pass this examination can then be evaluated by the more expensive process of collecting data on test and extra-laboratory work performance.

If the decision to use computer controlled testing is to be made either on the grounds of ease of administration

or greater accuracy of evaluation of what we now evaluate, then the decision should be dictated by economic considerations. Given that there exist two tools or the same psychological function, one computerized and one in a more traditional format, which is the most cost effective? Psychological issues are raised only when it is asserted that computerized tests are "better". Measures of cognition than are conventionally administered tests. This is a claim for a psychological gain that is distinct from economic gain.

Providing that the purpose of testing is for personnel screening, it does not appear that there is very much psychological gain to be obtained from computer controlled testing or logical reasoning, verbal intelligence, or psychomotor abilities. The psychological functions that make up these domains are either not changed by the format of the test, or (in the case of psychomotor functioning) are highly specific to the particular task being used. We are somewhat more optimistic about the use of computer controlled testing if the purpose of an examination is diagnosis of individual performance. In this case such more extensive testing is possible, and computerised administration may make it possible to tap aspects of a person's language processing

or problem solving behavior that would not be reliably revealed over a few minutes testing, regardless of the format used.

Computer controlled testing is likely to have much more of an impact on the study of individual differences in spatial-visual reasoning, memory, and on the study of individual differences in attention. In these three fields there are a number of interesting test situations that are simply not feasible without the use of computer controlled testing stations. Research on the development and validation of such test procedures could begin today.

Perhaps one of the most challenging questions for future research is whether or not learning potentials can be evaluated by having people solve problems while being coached by a computer program. At present, questions about learning potential are asked almost exclusively about children, and the research presumes an interaction between the child and a dedicated, highly skilled instructor. It is conceivable, but by no means certain, that interactive computing techniques could be used to identify learning potential in adults. It is unlikely that research in this area would result in procedures that

would be useful for initial personnel screening, because the time required to assess learning potential is likely to be on the order of hours. It may be possible to assess adult learning potential in diagnostic situations, where the organization has a commitment to the individual.

Given the anticipated reduced size of extracts to the workforce over the next fifty years, combined with the rapid introduction of new technology, diagnostic testing may become much more widespread than it is today. If so, high priority should be given to research on the assessment of adult learning potential.

Computers are fascinating, flexible, and highly useful tools. In presenting a somewhat mixed evaluation, we feel almost as if we are taking a stand against progress. Nevertheless, we feel that caution is in order. Computers do raise many possibilities for testing and training. Whether these possibilities are useful ones, though, is not a question that can be answered by demonstrating engineering feasibility. The questions that have to be answered are psychological, and the answers can only be obtained by appropriate psychological research.

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Footnotes

1. One can imagine some extremely exotic computer controlled tests. We restrict our discussion to the sort of testing that would be possible on computer systems that one could reasonably expect to be available for very large testing programs. It will be assumed that the terminal consists of a standard 512×512 dot, black and white cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor and that the response device is either a typewriter style keyboard, some form of panel operated by button presses or, when specifically mentioned, a light pen or similar analog tracking device whose position can be sensed by the computer. This definition covers such devices as the paddles and steering wheels associated with computer games, touch sensitive screens, and drawing devices such as the electronic "mouse". We will consider systems with voice generated output, but not systems with speech recognition capability. Finally, no consideration will be given to devices that can record electrophysiological signals into computer readable form. While active research on the relation between electrophysiological and behavioral measures on cognition is being conducted, we do not
2. Nickerson, R. Comments on papers in the symposium on individual differences. American Educational Research Association Meeting, Montreal, March 1983.
3. Gopher, D. Remarks on individual differences in attention. Presented at the Conference on Individual Differences. Univ. of CA, Santa Barbara, March 1983.
4. Some illusions may be very difficult to produce using the sort of computer testing configuration that we envisage. Virtually all standard display systems presenting computer testing or communicative use some variety of the standard television display, i.e. 520 x 520 dots, refreshed at 60 Hz. Display changes fast enough to produce or vary an illusion may not be possible in all cases.
5. Payne, D. USAF presentation at the Tri-Services Cognitive Sciences Synthesis Conference, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, CA, March 1984. *Eyliones*, p..

believe that electrophysiological measures will be utilized in personnel evaluation in the near future. There will, no doubt, be important special exceptions to this statement.

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Presentation at Office of Naval Research Contractors' Meeting on Individual Differences and Information Processing. Yale University, March, 1983.

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| 20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Microcomputers can serve as automated testing stations for use in psychometric assessment. There are economic advantages in conducting aptitude and intelligence testing with such stations. Is it possible to improve the quality of cognitive assessment by extending the range of cognitive abilities to be assessed? Two types of extension are considered; modifying and expanding testing procedures for psychological functions that are components of conventional tests, and the extension of testing to psychological functions not generally assessed by conventional intelligence or aptitude tests. Computer- | | |

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ized presentations will make relatively little difference in our ways of testing verbal comprehension. Computer controlled testing could well extend the ways in which we evaluate spatial-visual functioning and memory. The impact of testing on the evaluation of reasoning is unclear. Computer-controlled item presentation makes it possible to conceive of tests of learning and attention, neither of which are evaluated in most psychometric programs today. The psychological nature of the abilities being assessed raises problems in assessment that are irrelevant to the use of computers. Some research questions are identified that ought to be explored before testing is extended into these fields. Computer-controlled evaluation could be extended to the assessment of criterion performance, either in the normal working situation or in a simulation of the workplace. While evaluation of this sort does raise social questions, it clearly presents an opportunity to obtain validation data for psychological assessment studies.

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